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ABSTRACT

This document was developed to assist teachers and school districts in analyzing and selecting instructional materials for American Indian students. The document's recommendations are consistent with Wisconsin state standards and with guidelines set forth by American Indian, Alaska Native, and international indigenous education associations. Selection criteria for evaluating content areas are listed. Subsequent sections of the document discuss criteria for evaluating the organizational structure of instructional materials, the extent to which the materials emphasize active learning and provide culturally appropriate student experiences, the extent to which the materials support recommended teaching methods and educational strategies, the materials' use of multiple means of assessment, and how all components of the materials work together to produce high quality student experiences. A glossary of terms and 20 resources for additional information are included. (SV)

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Won in the Classroom

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Guidelines for the Selection of Culturally Appropriate Materials

RC023172

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"The battle for Indian children will be *won in the classroom,* not on the street or on horses. The students of today are our warriors of tomorrow."

Wilma Mankiller, Cherokee

GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION

of Culturally Appropriate Instructional Materials

The selection of appropriate instructional materials is critical to the implementation of high quality instruction. The members of the Indian Community School, Inc.'s Board of Directors for 1999-2000 are:

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Andrew Conners, *Bad River Ojibwe*

WON IN THE CLASSROOM: Guidelines for the Selection of Culturally Appropriate Instructional Materials was developed to assist teachers and districts in analyzing instructional materials for American Indian students with respect to critical elements in the areas of subject matter, content, organizational structure, student experiences, teaching strategies, assessment and equity.

This document reflects the consideration and input of all staff at ICS. The design and language of the guide draws heavily on the work developed by the Arkansas Statewide Systemic Initiative and the Arkansas Department of Education entitled Arkansas Guidelines for Selection of Instructional Materials for Mathematics & Science (used with permission).

INTRODUCTION

Selection of Instructional Materials

The selection of culturally appropriate instructional materials should be consistent with the mission, goals, objectives, and the guidelines of the school. Textbooks have traditionally been the major component of curricula. Materials for instruction include but are not limited to:

- » textbooks and supplementary materials;
- » other printed materials (trade books, curriculum guides);
- » manipulative and laboratory materials;
- » student assessment materials;
- » professional development materials;
- » distance education programs;
- » technologies (e.g., computer software, calculators, CD-ROM, video disks, video tape); and,
- » instructional telecommunications programs.

Instructional materials influence what and how teachers teach and what and how students learn. Good materials and programs can significantly improve students' attitudes and achievement. The recommendations in this document are consistent with the following state and national publications:

AISES (1995) Educating American Indian/Alaskan Native Elementary & Secondary Students. Guidelines for Mathematics, Science, Technology Program.

Alaskan Native Knowledge Network (1999). Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools. See also www.ankn.uaf.edu.

Alaska Native Knowledge Network (1998). Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools.

Alaska Native Knowledge Network (Draft). Guidelines for Documenting, Representing, and Utilizing Cultural Knowledge.

World Indigenous People's Conference: Education (1999). The Coolangatta Statement On Indigenous People's Rights in Education.

Wisconsin State Standards.

Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction (1996).
Wisconsin Indian Treaties and Tribal Sovereignty: Classroom Activities.
Classroom Activities on Chippewa Treaty Rights.
Classroom Activities on Wisconsin Indian Treaties and Tribal Sovereignty.
American Indian Tribal Government.
Current Federal Indian Law and Its Precedents.
Indian-White Relations: Historical Foundations.
Available Publications Sales, WI Dept. of Public Instruction, Drawer 179, Milwaukee, WI 53293-0179.

These state and national documents make several fundamental assumptions about culturally relevant instructional materials that have been given consideration in developing the criteria in this document:

- Materials should reflect high expectations of ALL students.
- Materials should use local cultural and environmental knowledge.
- Materials should provide numerous and appropriate experiences that encourage students to develop confidence in their own critical thinking.
- Materials should ensure active participation of students in learning, doing, and evaluating content.
- Materials content should reflect current research.
- Materials should reflect a developmentally appropriate sequence and allow for teacher flexibility.
- Materials should challenge students to construct choices and make decisions, subjecting each action and outcome to reflection using indigenous values.

Each category in this document addresses important aspects for evaluating instructional materials and provides a means for looking at instructional materials from an indigenous perspective. The checklist in each category contains indicators which may be used in a variety of ways. In order to use the checklists as evaluation tools, a scoring scheme will need to be established. For example, depending on user needs, the checklists may be preliminary evaluation tools (yes/no), or they may be used as quantitative evaluation tools (0-5 rating) for final selection of materials.

Teachers or districts may determine that only one or two of the sections described are appropriate for selecting materials for a particular situation. Selecting materials for a year-long course, for example, is more complex than selecting supplemental materials.

SELECTION CRITERIA, PART 1:

Content

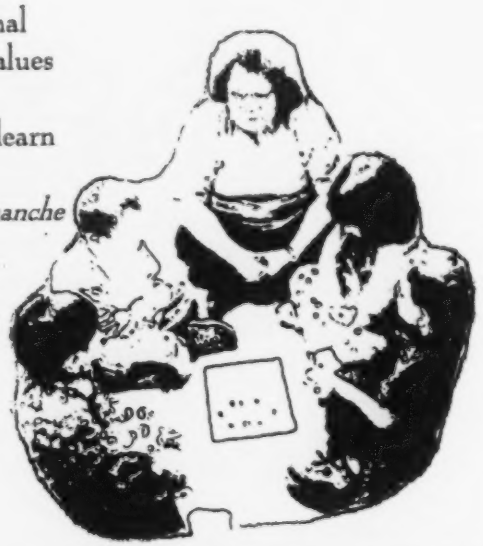
Instructional materials should support effective learning. The materials should satisfy the major goals of improving students' abilities to solve problems, reason mathematically and scientifically, make connections to other ideas and experiences, and communicate effectively. The content should be comprehensive, as well as culturally representative, and provide for the natural and logical development of topics. Content areas should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- The curricula reflect American Indian cultural diversities and address historical perspectives.
- Content is standards-based, comprehensive, and appropriate for the students for whom it is intended.
- Problem-solving is built into the instructional materials through investigative or inquiry situations that are simple enough to be manageable but complex enough to provide challenge.
- Problem-solving situations are relevant and adaptable to individual, small group or large group instructional settings.
- Reasoning is built into the materials at all levels. Students should have opportunities to explain and justify their thinking in the context of appropriate values.
- Connections are extended throughout the instructional activities by inter-relating concepts, procedures, and intellectual processes.
- Connections are made schoolwide within and across the disciplines.
- Communication is an important part of the materials. Students have many opportunities to communicate ideas and language and to develop self-confidence.
- Instructional materials present opportunities for students to explain, conjecture, and defend their ideas in a variety of ways.
- Learning activities are child-initiated and often include activities that develop social responsibility and interpersonal skills characteristics of indigenous cultures.

- » Materials reflect the development of ways of observing, thinking, experimenting, and validating that are ever changing in scope.
- » Materials reflect the development of problem-solving processes that permeate the entire content and provide the context in which concepts and skills are learned.
- » Hands-on activities are incorporated on a regular basis.
- » Cooperative learning activities are routinely included.
- » Textbook knowledge relates content to the contemporary lives of American Indians/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiians.
- » Career information is included on a regular basis.
- » Role models representing both genders and people of various cultural groups are included.
- » Graphics are accurate representations of all American Indian/Alaska Natives/ Native Hawaiians.
- » Multilingual versions are available, as appropriate.
- » Activities are included that address different learning styles and are multi-sensory in nature.

"Preserving and strengthening the bonds of traditional and contemporary American Indian/Alaska Native values while balancing the successful participation in a diverse and modern world demands role models who learn while teaching."

G.S. Briscoe, Comanche



PART 2:

Organizational Structure

The curriculum must be appropriate for all students and should be organized into cohesive units, multi-day investigations and worthwhile tasks. The purpose of the activities should be clearly defined. The units, investigations, and tasks should be of sufficient breath and depth for students to develop ever-increasing levels of understanding of content. Activities should include the appropriate use of technology and should give students opportunities to apply what they know to the investigations of new ideas. Organizational structure of instructional materials should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- » Units are organized around major ideas and are of sufficient duration for students to develop a broad understanding of concepts.
- » A high percentage of instructional activities extend beyond a single day. Such activities address more than one content objective.
- » Students work on worthwhile tasks that invite them to experiment with a variety of strategies and results.
- » Materials incorporate the appropriate use of calculators, computers, and other forms of technology as tools for students to solve problems.

PART 3:

Student Experiences

Instructional materials should emphasize active learning on the part of all students. They should consistently include activities that call for investigation and exploration, problem-solving and conjecture of the results. The materials should include "friendly" activities showing students that solving problems may include making "false starts," evaluating solutions, then starting over again if necessary. The materials should encourage exploration of concepts at concrete, semi-concrete, and abstract levels. Student experiences should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- » Students are expected to ground their work using culturally accepted values.
- » Students are expected to analyze and value cultural diversity and inter-tribal/ national perspectives.
- » Students are expected to participate in cultural events, applying principles found in moral stories to real life decision making.
- » Students are encouraged to live in harmony with Mother Earth, others, and self.
- » Materials encourage students to explore and conjecture in a risk-free environment, make and find errors, and make judgments as to the appropriateness of their answers.
- » Materials engage students in discourse as they participate in concrete, semi-concrete, and abstract activities.
- » Materials engage students in the use of manipulative materials to model situations and in use of technology as a tool to analyze data, calculate numerical results, and solve problems.
- » Materials engage students in determining an appropriate response to solving a problem, and to decide whether an exact solution or an estimate is appropriate.
- » Students are expected to choose an appropriate way to communicate data.
- » Materials allow students to develop scientific process skills (i.e., observing, classifying, analyzing data, drawing conclusions, inferring), "habits of mind," and communication skills in order to apply scientific and mathematical content to solve problems and make decisions.

PART 4:

Teaching Strategies

Instructional materials should provide appropriate support for teachers as they implement the teaching methods recommended in the standards. These materials should include strategies for the active involvement of students in their own learning, ideas that support teaching the content in a variety of student groupings, and the appropriate use of technology within the classroom.

Teaching strategies included in instructional materials should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- » Terminology is clearly defined and contextualized.
- » Materials assist teachers in meeting the instructional needs of all students.
- » Teaching strategies suggested are appropriate for the level of the learner and the intent of the learning experience.
- » Materials provide suggestions that assist teachers in helping students meet these major goals: learning to value content, becoming confident in their own ability to learn content, becoming problem-solvers, learning to communicate and reason logically, learning to collect and analyze data, learning to communicate findings and conclusions.
- » All subjects are addressed holistically and contribute to the proficiency in the standard.
- » Materials provide suggestions for teachers on how to use time, physical space, and manipulative materials in ways that facilitate learning.
- » Materials provide suggestions for teachers to help them reflect on what happens in the classroom in order to adjust their teaching plans.
- » Materials are selected and/or modified to reflect each child's learning strengths.
- » Materials provide suggestions for teaching students to work in cooperative and collaborative groups.
- » Materials provide suggestions for informing and involving families to support and encourage student learning.
- » Materials are selected and/or modified to address individual weaknesses.

"Skills are powerful motivators of self-esteem."

Linda Sue Warner, Comanche

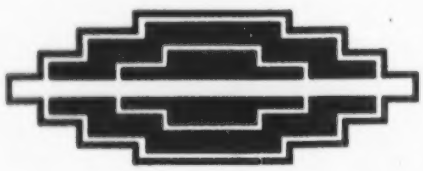
PART 5:

Assessment

Student assessment strategies within the instructional materials should provide teachers with information about what students know, how they think, and what they can do. The assessment must be aligned with the appropriate standards used at the school. The strategies must match the instructional purpose and be directly relevant to student learning experiences.

Materials should include multiple means of assessments. Assessments should be broad in scope, evaluate the extent to which students can apply concepts to new situations, and incorporate appropriate use of technology. Assessment within instructional materials should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- » Assessment is equitable. Types of assessment take into account the ways in which students' unique qualities influence how they learn and how they communicate that knowledge.
- » Assessment is integrated into the materials.
- » Assessment activities are similar to learning activities and help teachers determine the extent to which students have processed information and can apply it to problem-solving situations.
- » Assessment activities include multiple means of both formal and informal assessment such as student self-reflection, observation, oral and written work, student demonstrations, and cooperative learning.
- » The appropriate use of technology is built into assessment activities.
- » All aspects of knowledge are assessed, including conceptual understanding, procedural knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- » Materials ensure that students understand the purposes and utilization of assessment.
- » Assessment activities are purposeful.
- » Students demonstrate self-assessment activities consistent with positive interactions and harmonious living.
- » Assessment activities are balanced by student, teacher, parent, and community values.



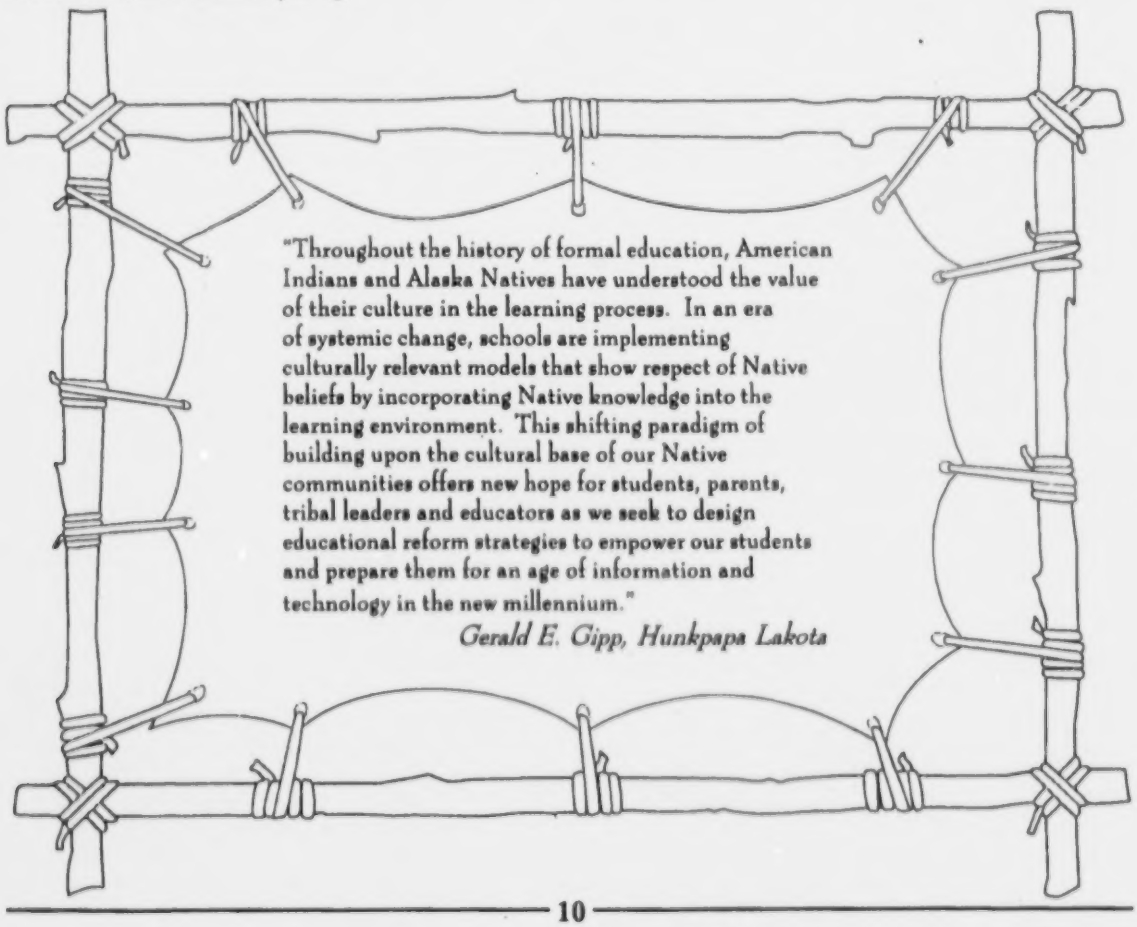
SUMMARY:

Consider How All Components Work Together

Each section of this document addresses important aspects of high-quality instructional materials. Although these categories look at instructional materials from different perspectives, they intersect. What should be emphasized is how all components work together to produce high quality student experiences. If teachers or districts use this document and find that published instructional materials do not match the criteria presented, they typically develop their own materials. These materials can be shared with other schools and may be modified to reflect local and community knowledge and concerns.

The task is not completed with the selection of instructional materials. Assisting teachers to use the materials to implement a quality program requires ongoing support and professional development. Site based leadership and support are essential.

Our ICS home page on the World Wide Web provides links to additional resources on American Indian/Alaska Native curricular development, including examples of content appropriate materials. Please visit www.ics-milw.org.



"Throughout the history of formal education, American Indians and Alaska Natives have understood the value of their culture in the learning process. In an era of systemic change, schools are implementing culturally relevant models that show respect of Native beliefs by incorporating Native knowledge into the learning environment. This shifting paradigm of building upon the cultural base of our Native communities offers new hope for students, parents, tribal leaders and educators as we seek to design educational reform strategies to empower our students and prepare them for an age of information and technology in the new millennium."

Gerald E. Gipp, Hunkpapa Lakota

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GLOSSARY of TERMS

***Note:** Terms are defined for the context in which they are used in this document.*

Active Learning - Learning experiences that vigorously engage the student whether physical actions or cognitive functioning.

American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian - Any person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and maintaining cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Appropriate use of technology - Technology used for a valid instructional purpose which is integral to or provides assistance in the teaching and learning process. Technology can be used to analyze and organize data, calculate numerical results, and solve problems.

Assessing student progress - Information about what students know and are able to do, how they think, and how they learn. Assessment tasks should be broad in scope and evaluate the extent to which students can apply concepts to new situations. Multiple means of assessment are used, including observations, oral and written work, student demonstrations, and cooperative learning activities. The use of technology is built into assessment activities where appropriate.

Concepts - General and fundamental ideas.

Constructivism - An approach to teaching and learning based on the premise that cognition (learning) is the result of "mental construction." In other words, students learn by fitting new information together with that they already know. Constructivists also believe that learning is affected by the context in which an idea is taught.

Curriculum - The what (scope), when (sequence), and how (program) of an instructional plan for students. The scope is content, skills and attitudes that are part of the program. The scope addresses how much is taught and of what variety. The sequence defines what is taught at which levels and in which courses. The program is the experiences that students encounter and the strategies and methods that teachers employ.

Developmentally appropriate - The match between the learning task and student's cognitive, social or physical ability to perform the task successfully.

Discourse - The verbal engagement of students in discussion, reflection, and analytical conversation.
Equitable Assessment - The degree to which the process of gathering evidence has provided opportunities equally appropriate for each student to demonstrate thinking processes, knowledge, and skills that he or she developed.

Equity - The product of a process which ensures fairness for every child within the educational system.

Grouping - Cooperative and collaborative groups are examples of different students' learning environments.

GLOSSARY of TERMS

Habits of Mind - Attitudes that enable students to be creative and critical thinkers and problem-solvers. Curiosity, honesty, objectivity, skepticism, creativity, tolerance, and open-mindedness are examples of "habits of mind."

Integration - Connections among topics within the discipline of mathematics or science (i.e., geometry connected with algebra or biology connected with chemistry), between mathematics and science as well as other disciplines, and between mathematics and science and the real world.

Inquiry - A process through which students investigate a problem, devise and work through a plan to solve the problem, and propose a solution.

Literary - Appropriate to or used in literature; of or relating to the knowledge of literature.

Nature of Mathematics - The development of a repertoire of heuristic (learning through discourse, investigations, etc.) Problem-solving strategies that provide the context in which concepts and skills are taught and learned.

Nature of Science - The development of ways of observing, thinking, experimenting, and validating that are open to inquiry, open to controversy, and non-dogmatic in substance.

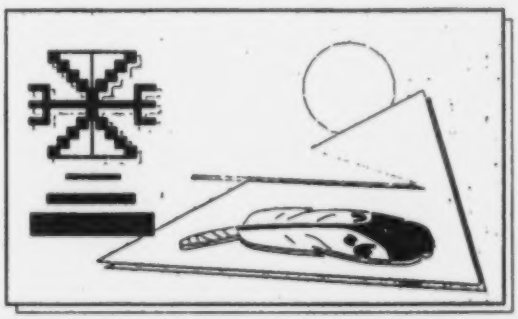
Process Skills - Abilities used to explore, gather, interpret, and communicate data. Examples include observing, classifying, measuring, interpreting data, inferring, communicating, controlling variables, developing models and theories, hypothesizing, and predicting.

Quality - Degree of excellence.

Reasoning - to determine or conclude by logical thinking.

Values/Traditional Values - ideals expressed by multi-cultural/tribal/national groups as core determinants of accepted behavior, e.g. respect.

Supplemental instructional materials - Elements added to strengthen or extend primary instructional materials.



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Your Sources for More Information

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Educational Native links and sites. K-12, language, culture, etc.
http://nativesearch.com
http://www.pitt.edu/~lmitten/indians.html
http://www.hanksville.phast.umass.edu

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Teacher's Guide for CD-ROM: *Vision Quest: Men, Women & Scared Sites of the Sioux Nation.* http://www.creighton.edu/~dollsj/study.html.

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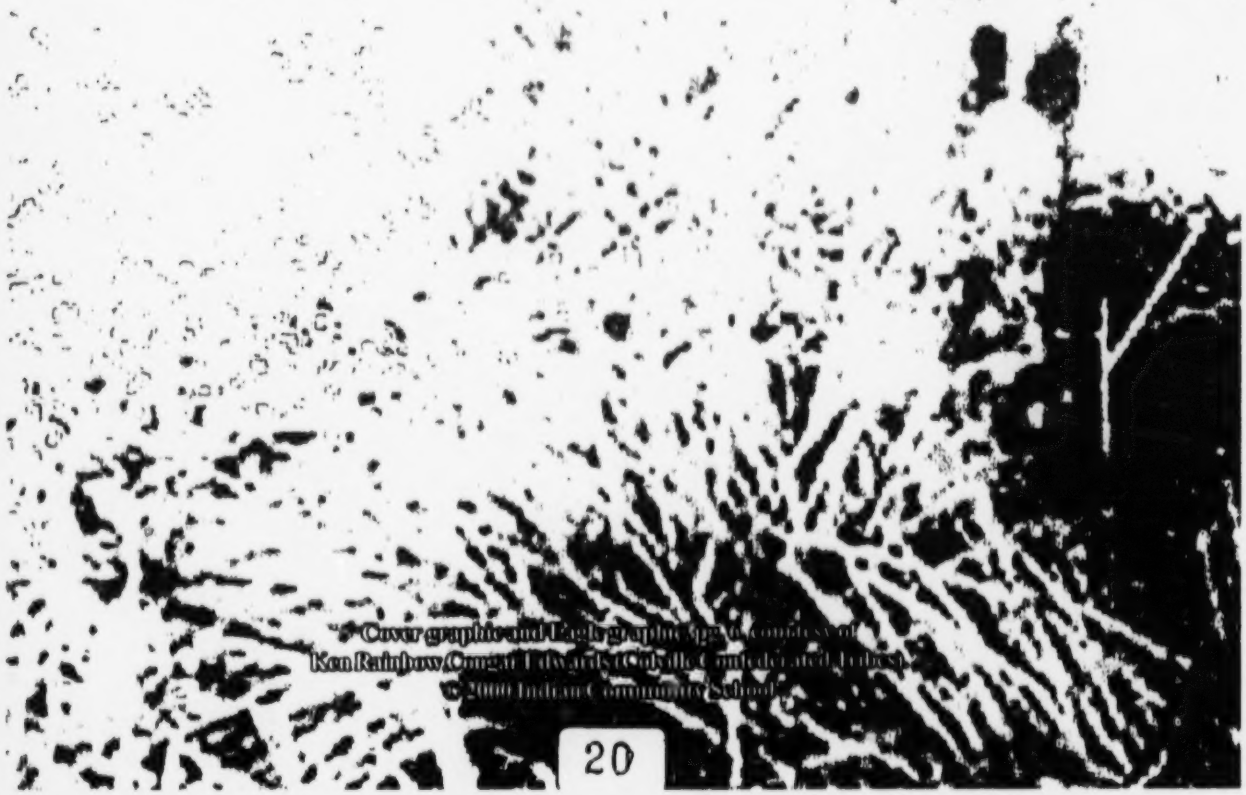

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